THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) yes, Sir. The administrative approval of Government of India for continuance of the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme on "Development of Freshwater Aquaculture" for the year 2001-2002 has been issued to the Government of Madhya Pradesh on 15.6.2001.

(b) For the Central share of Rs. 151.826 lakh which was available with the State Government as on 1-4-2001 towards unspent balance, revalidation sanction was issued in May, 2001 to Govt. of Madhya Pradesh.

Invention of sowing equipment

311. DR. ABRAR AHMED: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have invented any tractor without engine, to be driven by bullocks rather than diesel to be made available to farmers at cheaper rates, in order to provide state-of-the-art sowing plants; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) A bullock drawn multi purpose tool bar has been developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and other organizations. This equipment can be used for ploughing, harrowing, cultivation, ridging, sowing and transportation.

Improving the agricultural sector

†312. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a major stress was given by government in the budget speech 2002-2003 on improvement of the agro-sector;

(b) if so, the effective measures taken by Government in this regard, so far; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) A series of measures were announced in the Finance Minister's budget speech 2002-2003 to give major boost to agriculture sector and the Government have taken appropriate follow-up action such as credit linked subsidy scheme for construction of rural godowns, initiation of steps for asking State Governments to amend their APMC laws; higher allocation for the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme; amendment in Milk and Milk Product Order to remove restrictions on new milk processing capacity while continuing to regulate health and safety conditions; relaxations for higher credit flow to small and marginal farmers; additional release of 88.76 lakh Kishan Credit Cards alongwith personal insurance package during 2001-2002; setting up of a Task Force to oversee the setting up of Agriculture Insurance Corporation; removal of restrictions on export of agricultural products except onion, niger seed and wood; setting up of 28 Agri-Export zones, promotion of agriculture extension through 261 Krishi Vigyan Kendras and new extension guidelines and reducing custom duty on agricultural machinery and implements.

(c) Does not arise.

Impact of India joining UPOV

313. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "Move to join UPOV will affect farmers' rights", appearing in 'Hindu' dated 7th June, 2002;

(b) if so, whether Government's decision to join UPOV has been widely criticized by the eminent researchers in the field of agriculture;

(c) if so, whether Government propose to reconsider their decision and not join UPOV, in the interest of the farmers; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 'Gene Campaign' a non-governmental organization, has criticized the proposal to accede to the UPOV Convention, 1978 Act.